

NEWS SNAPS

10 killed in Pabna last month

UNB, Pabna

Ten people were killed in five upazilas of Pabna in last month, signaling an alarming deterioration of law and order situation.

Of the killings, two were reported from Sadar while one each from Chatmohor and Atgharia, two from Ishwardi and four from Sathiya upazilas. Besides, six robberies, 14 burglaries and four rapes took place in the five upazilas during the period. The shocking figures were revealed in a monthly meeting of law and order committee Tuesday. During the period, police filed 131 cases in connection with various incidents.

Youth succumbs to injuries in Feni

UNB, Feni

A youth, who was seriously injured by his younger brother at Baurkhuma village at Parshuram upazila in Feni died from his wounds at Sadar Hospital Wednesday.

Medical sources said Mozammel Haq, 25, son of late Abdul Haq of the village, was critically wounded as his younger brother Obaidul Haq hit him with a wooden seat following a family feud in the morning. He was rushed to Parshuram Upazila Health Complex and later shifted to the Sadar Hospital where he died in the evening. Obaidul went into hiding.

Food poisoning kills one in Bhola

UNB, Bhola

A farmer was killed and his two little daughters fell sick due to food poisoning at Dhania in Sadar upazila of Bhola Tuesday.

Villagers said Tasir Ahmed, 55, and his daughters Joinab and Peyara Begum fell sick after taking lunch at his house. They were rushed to Bhola Sadar Hospital where Tasir died after admission.

Clash over trifling matter kills one

UNB, Pabna

A man was killed and a woman was critically injured in a clash at Tarabaria Chokbari village in Sadar upazila of Pabna Wednesday night.

Police said Nurul Islam Nuru, 60, was killed during the clash between family members of Ramzan Ali Sheikh and Nurul Islam over a trifling matter. The injured, Gofurunnisa, 56, was admitted to Shujanagar hospital. A case was filed.

Clash over fishing leaves one dead

UNB, Kishoreganj

A fierce clash between two groups of villagers over fishing at Katiadi upazila in Kishoreganj left a man dead and 25 injured recently.

According to a delayed report, the clash between the two groups from Bhonavata, Karuapara and Jarutala villages took place over fishing at Bhogli Beel on March 15, leaving 26 wounded. Of the injured, Mozammel Haq alias Gani Bhuiyan, 31, died at a local hospital the following day.

Youth rapes seven-year-old girl

UNB, Bogra

A seven-year-old girl was raped by a youth at Mohinura village in Dhunot upazila of Bogra Wednesday.

Police said Babor Ali, 18, son of Ashat Ali, took two little girls into a bush and raped one of them there. Local people rescued the little girl and sent her to the upazila health complex. She was later shifted to Muhammad Ali Hospital as her condition deteriorated.

Alleged terrorist arrested in Barisal

UNB, Barisal

An alleged terrorist, wanted in a number of cases, was arrested from Harinafulia area on the outskirts of Barisal town Thursday.

The arrested was identified as Shahjahan Gazi alias Tera Shahjahan, 45. He was wanted in 15 cases, including five of murder. Police said Shahjahan, who was also involved in two murders took place on March 7, was on the run during five years rule of the Awami League government. He recently came out of his hideout and introduced himself as the bodyguard of a local ruling party leader.

20 injured in attack by terrorists

UNB, Jamalpur

At least 20 people were injured in an attack by terrorists at Godashinla Bazar in sadar upazila of Jamalpur Wednesday.

Witnesses said the terrorists, allegedly led by Jobbar Master and Abdullah and Khoka, swooped on shops of the bazar and looted valuables as the shop owners refused to give them toll. They fired shots and exploded homemade bombs, leaving 20 people injured. The shop owners went on an indefinite strike from Thursday protesting the attack.

Foreign vessel fined

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A foreign vessel was recently cautioned and fined for the first time for polluting environment by the Chittagong Port Authority (CPA).

MV Ocean Pride, the flag carrier of Saint Vincent and carrying cement clinker from Malaysia, was fined Tk. 55,000 and cautioned for polluting environment along the port channels, stretching from the Patenga estuary to port jetties, by emitting black smoke.

First class magistrate of CPA Munir Chowdhury noticed this while leading a mobile court and later issued a notice to the captain of the vessel to appear before his court. Magistrate Munir Chowdhury served the aforesaid penalty and cautioned the captain as he appeared before the court.

17 metric tons of rice gutted in Khagrachhari

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cht

Fire gutted nearly 17 metric tons of rice, stored at a house for the tribal refugees repatriated from India at Baghaichhari at Dighinala in Khagrachhari in the early hours on Monday.

Police said that the fire broke out at the house of Ananda Mohan Chakma at midnight on Monday and gutted rice stored for distribution among the tribal refugees, repatriated from India.

Police could not confirm the cause of fire.

A case has been filed with the Dighinala police station in this connection.



PHOTO: STAR

This is Kumarpara old bus stand crossing in Rajshahi city. Five roads and lanes have met here. It remains very busy with heavy rush of vehicles. There is a traffic post for on-duty police personnel. But no traffic police was present during busy hours on Sunday.

Bleak prospect of aus farming in GK project area

UNB, Pabna

Thousands of farmers under GK Project, the country's largest irrigation scheme, are getting frustrated seeing a bleak prospect of aus cultivation as most canals of the project have already dried up due to adverse effects of Farakkah Barrage.

Hundreds of kilometers of canals of the projects dried up, leaving thousands of acres of land uncultivated in the Irri-boro season.

Although the authorities started dredging the intake channel and pump areas of the project three months back, the chances of getting water from the Ganges are slim.

Official sources said pump machines of the project were scheduled to have been put into operation from March 13 for preparing seedbeds for the aus season, but the authorities failed to do so due to uncertainty of getting due share of the Ganges water.

In the Irri-boro season, only a few farmers could cultivate paddy with water from deep and shallow tubewells.

Even though Bangladesh signed a long-term historic water sharing treaty with India in 1996, Bangladesh rarely received its due share of water.

"Meetings between officials of the two countries are regularly held in every dry season, but of no avail,"

said an official in Pabna wishing anonymity.

Former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina while addressing a meeting on a dried up-riverbed of the Padma at Hardinge Bridge in 1996 said, "our due share of water will continue to come from now on and every drop of it will be utilised to turn the area into a granary of food."

But the farmers of the region hardly got water in dry season and a vast area on the vicinity of the Padma from Hardinge Bridge to Gualonda has turned into a desert.

According to officials, the Kushtia-based GK Project was kicked off in 1963 aiming to irrigate 7.37 lakh hectares of land in Kushtia, Jhenidah, Chuadanga, Magura, Jessore and Khulna from the Ganges. The project was to be implemented in seven phases.

As the project is totally dependent on the Ganges water, the main pump house of the project was set up at Bheramara in Kushtia for pumping out water.

But the water flow in the Ganges started to fall drastically in dry season following construction of the Farakka Bridge by India on the river. As a result, the GK project has virtually remained shelved following implementation of its first two phases.

Under the two phases, a total of 1.16 lakh hectares of land were brought under the project's irrigation facility, supplying water only

when it was necessary.

Unilateral withdrawal of water from the Ganges by India and its lack of respect to the Ganges water sharing treaty have made the GK project an ineffective scheme for Bangladesh.

A project official said they needed at least a 15-foot high water flow in the river to keep three big and 12 small pumps of the project operative, but water in the river was now flowing far below the required level, badly hampering irrigation.

The project officials had assured the farmers that they would supply water for preparing seedbeds for the coming season aus on March 13, but they could not do it due to weak flow of water in the Ganges.

Some 1.5 lakh acres of land in 13 upazilas of Kushtia, Jhenidah, Chuadanga and Magura remained outside the irrigation network from the very beginning.

An official at the Kushtia Water Development Board (WDB) office said there was little chance that they would be able to run the pumps of the project this year unless the water level in the river went up.

He said the average water flow in the river was 62000 cusecs until India started to unilaterally withdraw water from the Ganges. "Now the average flow stands at 18000 to 20000 cusecs," he said.

Another official said now the water flow in the river was higher than that of the last year.

Boro farming exceeds target in Faridpur

Better production expected if weather favours

ABDUL MATIN FAKIR, Faridpur

Boro farming has exceeded the target by 1771 hectares of land in Faridpur this season.

The targeted land in eight upazilas of the district was fixed at 37,000 hectares of land whereas boro was cultivated on 38,771 hectares, according to Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) sources.

The farmers expect better production than the previous years in view of the climatic condition prevailing in the district.

Some experienced boro farmers, when contacted, opined that the climate still prevailing in the district is most favourable for boro paddy cultivation adding that the yields per acre of land would be more than the previous years.

Upazila-wise break-up of the land brought under boro farming is as follows. A total of 7,135 hectares of land have been brought under boro-farming of which High Yielding Variety (HYV) was sown on 6640 hectares while local variety on 495 hectares in Sadar upazila, in

Char Bhadrason upazila boro was cultivated on 1265 hectares, of which HYV on 965 hectares while local variety on 300 hectares, in Nagarkanda Upazila boro was cultivated on 9368 hectares of which HYV on 9168 hectares while local variety on 210 hectares, in Sadarpur Upazila boro was cultivated on 2796 hectares of which HYV on 2,035 hectares while local variety on 761 hectares, in Bhanga Upazila boro was cultivated on 7,115 hectares of which HYV on 6,880 hectares while local variety on 235 hectares, in Madhukhali upazila boro was cultivated on 3653 hectares of which HYV on 3,590 hectares while local variety on 63 hectares, in Boalmari upazila boro was cultivated on 5,370 hectares of which HYV on 5,200 hectares while local variety on 170 hectares, and in Alifadanga upazila boro was cultivated on 2609 hectares, of which HYV on 2060 hectares while local variety on nine hectares.

Two hundred twenty-five field workers have been engaged in Faridpur to help the farmers with a view to making the programme a success.



PHOTO: STAR

Members of Feni unit of Bangladesh Sangbadik Samity, an association of rural journalists, protest the killing of Harun-or-Rashid, a senior journalist of Khulna at a meeting at Feni Deputy Commissioner's (DC) office recently. Harun was gunned down in Khulna on March 2.

Padma erodes Faridpur-Char Bhadrason road

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

Three to four km long pacca road from Char Hajiganj bazaar to Zakerer ghat on Faridpur-Char Bhadrason road was eroded by the Padma in the last rainy season.

As a result direct road communication between Char Bhadrason upazila headquarters and Faridpur district headquarters has been disrupted for the last seven to eight months causing untold sufferings to the people living in Char Bhadrason upazila.

Passengers of all ages have to move three to four km path on foot with luggage in hands and sometimes on head. Patients, children and the old are the worst sufferers.

Day to day activities including trade and commerce are being greatly hampered.

Though direct road communication between the two headquarters in possible via Sadarpur, it is excessively time consuming.

Moreover it costs three or four times more than the bus fare

needed direct from Char Bhadrason to Faridpur

So the concerned authorities are urged to construct a temporary road for the portion mentioned on Faridpur-Char Bhadrason road so that the transports can move directly between the two headquarters-Char Bhadrason and Faridpur.

Fake inspectors take away 200 TV sets

A CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

At least 200 television sets were taken away by some fake inspectors in Kushtia on Tuesday. Most of those were colour sets.

According to the victims, a group of people in disguise of TV licence inspectors came to the residences and asked the owners to show licence. The fake inspectors demanded Tk 600 from each television set owners who failed to produce the renewed licence.